

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 027237
ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 AID-05 SSO-00 SS-15 NSC-05
NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00 /058 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:JSBLODGETT:LAR
APPROVED BY AF:TWSEELYE
AF/C:TRBUCHANAN
IO/UNP:GBHELMAN (DRAFT)
PM/SAS:DHESTER (DRAFT)
IO/ML:PWKRIEBEL (DRAFT)
AID/AFR/CAWA:DGRIFFITH (DRAFT)
-----072209Z 086906 /66

O R 072135Z FEB 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027237

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CM

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND
CAMEROONIAN PRESIDENT AHIDJO

1. FOLLOWING IS FOR YOUR USE IN EVENT YOU MEET WITH
CAMEROONIAN PRESIDENT AHMADOU AHIDJO. ALTHOUGH AHIDJO
IS SAID TO SPEAK PIDGIN ENGLISH, HE WILL PREFER TO CONDUCT
THE MEETING IN FRENCH.

2. GENERAL: CAMEROON HAS THE UNIQUE DISTINCTION OF
BEING AFRICA'S ONLY OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL COUNTRY, A RESULT
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 027237

OF ITS DUAL FRENCH AND ENGLISH COLONIAL HERITAGE. ITS
POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION IS DISTINCTLY PRO-
WEST: IT MAINTAINS CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCE,
GREAT BRITAIN, WEST GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES, ROUGHLY
IN THAT ORDER OF PRIORITY; AND WHILE ITS RELATIONS WITH
THE PRC ARE GOOD, CAMEROON IS COOL TOWARDS THE SOVIET
UNION AND CUBA, BOTH OF WHICH FOR YEARS HAVE PROVIDED CO-
VERT SUPPORT TO CAMEROON'S OUTLAWED OPPOSITION MOVEMENT,
THE UNION DES PEUPLES CAMEROUNAIS (UPC). PARTLY BECAUSE
OF ITS SUSPICIONS ABOUT SOVIET/CUBAN INTENTIONS IN AFRICA,

CAMEROON WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF MODERATE AFRICAN COUNTRIES CALLING FOR AN END TO ALL FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ANGOLA, AND A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AMONG ALL THREE LIBERA-

TION GROUPS. ONLY AFTER THE MPLA HAD OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF A MAJORITY OF OAU MEMBERS DID CAMEROON JOIN THE MPLA BANDWAGON.

3. DESPITE ITS BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, CAMEROON HAS ALWAYS TAKEN PAINS TO KEEP ITS THIRD WORLD CREDENTIALS INTACT, AND IS SOMETIMES ABLE TO PLAY AN INFLUENTIAL, THOUGH LOW-KEY, ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. THE LAST TWO SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF THE OAU HAVE BEEN CAMEROONIAN; ONE OF THE THREE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AT THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IS A CAMEROONIAN; AND CAMEROON IS ONE OF A HANDFUL OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES REPRESENTING THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD AT THE CIEC MEETINGS IN PARIS. ON THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUE, CAMEROON'S OPPOSITION TO MINORITY RULE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROFOUND AND EMOTIONAL. PRESIDENT AHIDJO, 52 YEARS OF AGE, HAS HELD OFFICE CONTINUOUSLY SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1960. HE IS WIDELY RESPECTED BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE HIS COUNTRY FOR THE RELATIVE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY THAT HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO PRESERVE IN ONE OF AFRICA'S FEW REMAINING CIVILIAN DEMOCRACIES, AND FOR THE RESPONSIBLE, LOW-KEY IMAGE HE PROJECTS AS AN AFRICAN STATESMAN.
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 027237

4. BILATERAL RELATIONS: CAMEROON'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE CORDIAL AND UNMARRED BY THE VIOLENT UPS AND DOWNS WHICH HAVE CHARACTERIZED OUR RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES. UNDER ITS ECONOMIC POLICY OF "PLANNED LIBERALISM", CAMEROON HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO WELCOME U.S. INVESTMENT AND HAS TREATED FOREIGN BUSINESS IN A FLAWLESSLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER. THE U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN CAMEROON, TALLING ABOUT 3 MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR, IS NOT ONE OF THE LARGER ONES BUT RECEIVES GOOD COOPERATION FROM THE CAMEROONIANS.

5. IN THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF SMALL BUT UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS THAT CAMEROON IS SEEKING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. CONCERNED OVER THE SUCCESS OF SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, AND THE PROXIMITY OF UNSTABLE, SOVIET/CUBAN-SUPPORTED COUNTRIES (NOTABLY EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE) ON CAMEROON'S BORDERS, PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAS TURNED TO US WITH A REQUEST FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE. TO A CERTAIN DEGREE THIS REFLECTS DISSATISFACTION ON HIS PART WITH THE LEVEL OF ONGOING SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE FRENCH. ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES, CAMEROON HAS SOFTENED ITS POSITION NOTICEABLY IN THE LAST YEAR. IT ENTERED FORMAL RESERVATIONS TO THE DECISIONS AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

LAST YEAR ON BOTH KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. CAMEROON STRONG-

LY SUPPORTED THE GENERAL AFRICAN STRATEGY AT THE UNESCO 1976 GENERAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI, WHICH PRODUCED SOME RESULTS FAVORABLE TO US. IN THE COMMERCIAL ARENA, AHIDJO HAS REAFFIRMED HIS DESIRE FOR CLOSER U.S. CONTACTS BY APPOINTING THE FORMER COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN WASHINGTON TO THE KEY JOB OF DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRIES. FINALLY, OF SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE PERHAPS, PRESIDENT AHIDJO ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO ATTEND LAST YEAR'S JULY 4TH BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY -- THE FIRST TIME IN CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 027237

RECENT MEMORY THAT HE HAS ATTENDED ANY FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC FUNCTION IN YAOUNDE.

6. THUS, WHILE CAMEROON WILL CERTAINLY DO ALL IT CAN TO MAINTAIN ITS THIRD WORLD STANDING, IT DOES APPEAR THAT PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAS MADE A DELIBERATE EFFORT IN THE PAST YEAR TO REAFFIRM HIS TRADITIONAL WESTERN TIES. THIS CAN BE EXPLAINED IN PART BY HIS GENUINE CONCERN OVER THE THREAT OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF RADICAL AFRICAN GROUPS, AND IN PART PERHAPS BY THE ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS THAT CAMEROON HAS SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF OIL-INDUCED IMPORTED INFLATION COMBINED WITH THE STAGNANT PERFORMANCE OF ITS TWO MAJOR EXPORT INDUSTRIES, COCOA AND COFFEE. PRESIDENT AHIDJO OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES THAT THE WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE MORE TO OFFER IN SUPPORT OF CAMEROON'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAN DOES THE COMMUNIST WORLD.

7. ISSUES: MULTILATERAL ISSUES (YOU SHOULD RAISE)

(A) BACKGROUND: AS A COURTESY, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO ACKNOWLEDGE CAMEROON'S INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS, AND TO THANK PRESIDENT AHIDJO FOR THE MODERATE POSITION CAMEROON TOOK ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO US IN 1976.

(B) YOUR TALKING POINTS

-- WE ARE IMPRESSED BY THE FACT THAT CAMEROON HAS PLAYED AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE OAU, IN THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE, AND AT THE CIEC TALKS IN PARIS. THIS IS A TRIBUTE TO YOUR RESPECTED LEADERSHIP. WE VALUE CAMEROON'S MODERATE AND SOBER APPROACH TO MULTILATERAL ISSUES.

-- A CASE IN POINT IS CAMEROON'S BALANCED APPROACH IN 1976 TO TWO ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO US, KOREA AND PUERTO RICO. WE APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT CAMEROON WAS AMONG THE COUN-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 027237

TRIES AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS TO THE KOREA AND PUERTO RICO DECISIONS.

8. ISSUES: AHIDJO'S REQUEST FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE (HE MAY RAISE)

(A) BACKGROUND: IN THE WAKE OF THE SOVIET/CUBAN SUCCESS IN ANGOLA, PRESIDENT AHIDJO APPROACHED US LAST JULY WITH A REQUEST FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE. IN DECEMBER, PRESIDENT FORD APPROVED ASKING CONGRESS FOR 5 MILLION DOLLARS IN FMS FINANCING FOR FY 1978. THAT REQUEST IS INCLUDED IN THE WORLDWIDE FY 1978 SECURITY ASSISTANCE BUDGET WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION PRIOR TO BEING SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS.

(B) YOUR TALKING POINTS

-- WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERNS AND HOPE TO BE RESPONSIVE.

-- AS YOU KNOW, AN FMS FINANCING PROPOSAL FOR CAMEROON, OF MODEST BUT REASONABLE PROPORTIONS, HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN THE FY 1978 SECURITY ASSISTANCE BUDGET WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW BY THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.

9. ISSUES: US CONTRIBUTION TO CONSTRUCTION OF TRANS-CAMEROON RAILROAD, PHASE III (HE MAY RAISE)

(A) BACKGROUND: PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAS ALSO ASKED FOR A U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO CAMEROON'S TOP PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, TRANS-CAM III, WHICH CONSISTS OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RAIL LINE AND/OR ROAD FACILITIES FROM DOUALA TO YAOUNDE. THE U.S. WAS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO EARLIER RAIL CONSTRUCTION (FROM YAOUNDE TO NGAOUNDERE IN THE NORTH), PROVIDING A TOTAL OF ABOUT 22 MILLION DOLLARS IN LOANS BETWEEN 1964 AND 1975. IN RESPONSE TO
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 027237

AHIDJO'S MOST RECENT APPEAL, WE ARE ASKING CONGRESS TO APPROVE A 7.5 MILLION DOLLAR LOAN FOR TRANS-CAM III DURING FY 1978.

(B) YOUR TALKING POINTS

-- AS YOU KNOW, OUR ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN TRANS-CAM III IS LIMITED SOMEWHAT BY U.S. LEGISLATION WHICH FOCUSES THE MAJOR PART OF OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN THE AREAS OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

-- WE ARE NEVERTHELESS ASKING THE CONGRESS TO APPROVE A MODEST LOAN IN SUPPORT OF TRANS-CAM III DURING FY 1978.

10. BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF PRESIDENT AHIDJO FOLLOWS:

ON 4 APRIL 1975 AHMADOU AHIDJO, THE EFFECTIVE AND POPULAR LEADER OF CAMEROON SINCE 1958, WAS REELECTED TO ANOTHER 5-YEAR TERM AS PRESIDENT. AHIDJO, 52, IS A MASTER POLITICIAN WHO HAS UNIFIED THE COUNTRY, DEFUSED THE MORE EXPLOSIVE INTERNAL PROBLEMS, BUILT UP A STRONG SINGLE-PARTY GOVERNMENT, AND PROMOTED MODEST ECONOMIC PROGRESS. AUTHORITARIAN AND SOMETIMES RUTHLESS, HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED HIS GOAL OF NATIONAL UNITY FOR THE 6 MILLION CAMEROONIANS BY KEEPING A FIRM CONTROL OF POWER AND BY CAREFULLY BALANCING PATRONAGE AMONG THE COMPETING REGIONAL AND TRIBAL INTERESTS.

AHIDJO, WHO AVOIDS DEMAGOGIC AND VIOLENT DECLARATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, PUBLICLY DESCRIBES HIS APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AS NONALIGNED AND PRAGMATIC. IN 1971 HE BEGAN TO REDUCE CAMEROON'S TRADITIONAL DEPENDENCE ON FRENCH MONETARY ASSISTANCE AND TO SEEK AID IN FINANCING HIS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FROM ALL SOURCES. AT THAT TIME CAMEROON INITIATED AN OFFICIAL PROGRAM TO ATTRACT U.S. PRIVATE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION BY ENCOURAGING GREATER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 07 STATE 027237

PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE COUNTRY AND AN INCREASE IN THE PURCHASE OF U.S. GOODS. AHIDJO, WHO HAS BEEN IN THE UNITED STATES SIX TIMES (HIS LAST VISIT WAS A PRIVATE ONE IN 1969), IS IMPRESSED WITH THE AMERICAN WAY OF DOING BUSINESS.

THE PRESIDENT IS MARRIED AND HAS FOUR CHILDREN. HE IS AN ASSURED AND PERSUASIVE PUBLIC SPEAKER IN FRENCH. HE ALSO SPEAKS EXCELLENT PIDGIN.

VANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE027237
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/C:JSBLODGETT:LAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770043-0860
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197702100/baaaevff.tel
Line Count: 257
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 354c1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3233448
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND CAMEROONIAN PRESIDENT AHIDJO
TAGS: PFOR, CM, US, (YOUNG, ANDREW), (AHIDJO, AHMADOU)
To: LAGOS NIACT INFO YAOUNDE MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/354c1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009